

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL.

SATURDAY, Dec. 16.

The news and the trading alike on the Stock Exchange to-day were mixed. Although American stocks were generally strong in London, prices there and in the other European markets were depressed by reason of the familiar causes of higher money and renewed uneasiness over the situation in Russia. While there has been no great change for the worse in affairs in Russia during the week, there has been certainly little improvement there, and despatches to-day told of the formation of so-called revolutionary governments in various interior cities. The whole country seems in a state of extreme disorder which, if it does not approach that of anarchy, yet such as to upset business and render the collection of Government revenues difficult, if not impossible. All this has led to business embarrassments in other European countries where commercial and mercantile transactions with Russia have been large, and anxiety has been expressed lest these embarrassments, as the usual financial end of the year accountings approach, increase rather than diminish. At the same time there have been no more definite occurrences pointing in this direction during the week than there have been for some time previously and the shipments of gold from Russia to Germany which took place in the middle of the week, although they undoubtedly weakened Russian domestic finances, must have helped matters in Berlin and Frankfurt considerably. Sterling exchange in Paris today sank to the lowest point to which it has yet fallen and led to another sharp rise in the price of bar gold in London. To-day's local bank statement was wholly favorable. Loans decreased \$11,750,000, although from the advance in the stock market during the week it might have been expected that an expansion of credit had been going on, and the cash held by the banks increased \$3,27,300, or about as estimated yesterday. This resulted in an increase of \$5,207,000 in the bank surplus, which leaves the surplus nearly \$4,000,000 above the legal minimum, as against a deficit of \$1,250,000 last week. On the other hand, the market was very plainly affected to-day by the action taken yesterday by the directors of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway Company which necessitated the passing of the dividend upon the preferred stock of the Rock Island Company and by consideration over night of the annual report of the Southern Pacific Company, which was yesterday made public. While the conservative policy adopted by the Rock Island directors met with general approval and was regarded as one that if continued would tend to enhance the credit of the company in the long run, fears appeared to be entertained as to the effect, temporarily, upon speculative sentiment by a reduction of dividends in the case of one of the great railway systems of the country. As regards Southern Pacific, it was pointed out that while the gross earnings of the company were making satisfactory increases, and while the work of upbuilding and rebuilding of the company's property was being steadily carried on, it was yet obvious that the company was a long way from the distribution of dividends upon its common shares and that frequent predictions made in the past year as to the near approach of such an event were entirely unfounded. In the stock market as a whole to-day weakness predominated, although great strength was shown by particular issues and there seemed no vital or essential lowering in the market's undertone. As much of a dominating factor in the speculation as anything appeared to be the decline in Southern Pacific stock, which caused a sympathetic fall in the Union Pacific and many other of the leading railway shares; but a vigorous buying movement concentrated in the American Sugar Refining, American Beet Sugar, Colorado Fuel and Iron, Northern Pacific and Great Northern preferred shares, which caused large advances in these issues and led to greater strength, relatively, in the industrial than in the railroad list. The lowest prices in the day were made, rather singularly, after the appearance of the favorable bank statement, although following this decline the market rallied.

The pleasing statement can again be made at the end of the week that the activity of general business continues to increase and that industry and commerce in all lines in our country are more profitable than they ever have been. The holiday trade is, of course, the one thing that is occupying the attention of our merchants at the moment, and it is now admitted that the greatest business on record in this respect is being done. This is usually a season of the year when there is a distinct pause in the iron and steel trade due to stoppages for stock taking and to other normal causes, which almost invariably result in a let up both in the volume of buying orders and in the output of the various manufacturers; but this year no abatement of the usual sort is at all in evidence, although the rush of orders from the railroads that has been the feature of the business so long has, naturally, somewhat diminished. The extraordinary and altogether unprecedented strength of raw copper metal continues, holders of spot copper available for immediate delivery being apparently able to get practically any price they desire for their product, while sales of nearly the entire output of the country's copper mines have been made for five months ahead. This is a state of affairs that has been brought about, so far as all intelligent observation can judge, by the sole operation of the forces of supply and demand. To a degree never before known in the history of American copper mining present prices of copper are due to sound, normal and substantial business conditions, and the chief element in these conditions appears to be in the tremendous expansion of the consumption of copper in the last two years owing to the wonderful development of the use of electricity for business purposes. Conservative people familiar with the situation realize, of course, that the present price of copper metal is high and that the probabilities are that it will not be permanently maintained, but on the other hand they do not look for any considerable fall in the price of copper for twelve months to come. There was no change during the week in current news as to the cotton situation. The approximate size of the season's crop is still more or less of a mystery, with opinion favoring perhaps a smaller rather than a larger crop than was commonly estimated a fortnight ago. As our planters carried over from last season an unusually large amount of the former crop, 12 cent cotton means at the present time a visible harvest of riches for them.

New York Stock Exchange Sales Dec. 16.

CLOSING PRICES OF UNITED STATES BONDS.

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